



# Violent Crimes

For the first time ever,  
there were no mail  
bomb incidents during  
the fiscal year.

## Homicides, Assaults, and Threats

**T**he U.S. Postal Inspection Service is committed to ensuring employee safety in the workplace. Postal Inspectors reported 714 postal-related assaults and credible

threats during FY 2002 and made 325 arrests. Inspectors seek prosecution in assault cases when appropriate.

Following are examples of investigations by Postal Inspectors during FY 2002.

- A man was sentenced in June 2002 to more than 10 years in prison and three years' supervised release after shooting a Los Angeles letter carrier on March 7, 1997, as the carrier delivered mail on his route. The shooter fled and remained a fugitive for four years, until he was arrested in July 2001 by Inspectors from the Southern California Division's Major Crimes Team. The shooter must pay restitution of \$9,707 to the carrier.

- Two men who had been arrested by Postal Inspectors were sentenced on June 17, 2002, after entering guilty pleas to the May 2001 kidnapping and sexual assault of a Tennessee postmaster. On the basis of their "extreme conduct," the judge ordered the maximum sentence of more than 40 years in federal prison for one of the assailants and more than 26 years in prison for his cohort.

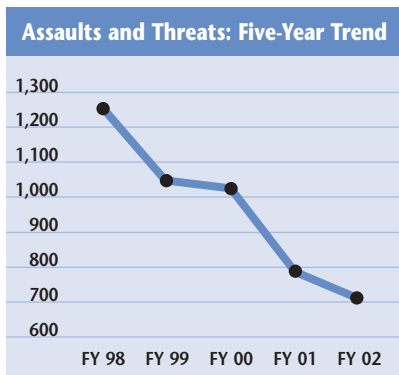
- Postal Inspectors are continuing their investigation into the murder of a Tulsa, Oklahoma, letter carrier, who was shot in the back while delivering mail. Inspectors arrested a suspect on the day of the murder in December 2001, when they found him carrying a revolver a few blocks from the crime scene. After the suspect pled not guilty in August 2002, a special, non-jury trial held that day ruled he was innocent by reason of insanity.

- A postal customer in Chicago, Illinois, struck a letter carrier on the head with a blunt instrument as the carrier delivered mail on her route in June 2002. As a result of the attack, the carrier received eight stitches to her head. She was able to provide Postal Inspectors and Chicago police with information on the incident, and they identified her assailant and took him into custody. He was admitted to Mt. Sinai Hospital for psychological evaluation and, on July 29, formally arrested by Chicago Division Postal Inspectors pursuant to a federal criminal complaint and warrant.

## Mail Bombs and Other Prohibited Mail

### Mail Bombs

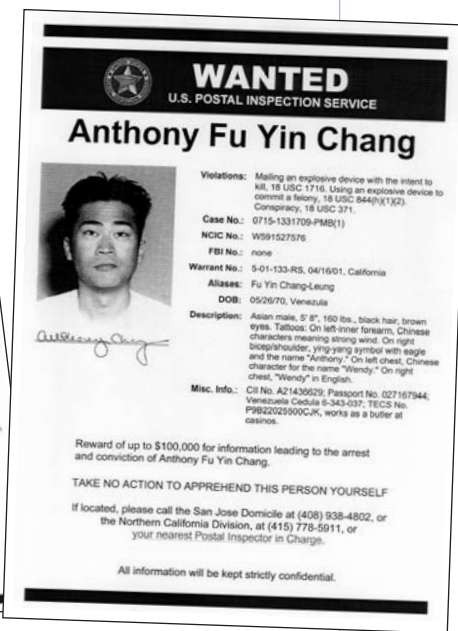
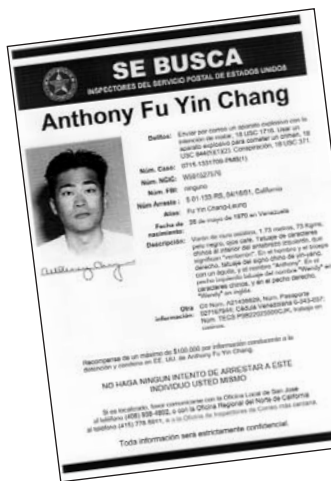
Historically, the motives for mail bombs and bomb threats often have related to personal and business disputes, with revenge being the common thread. In the



interest of protecting postal employees and customers, the Postal Inspection Service considers the investigation of mail bombs among its highest priorities. In FY 2002, Postal Inspectors arrest-

ed 65 suspects in incidents related to mail bombs or bomb threats, including threats made against postal facilities, hoax devices, suspicious items in the mail, and bombs or explosive devices placed in private mail receptacles. For the first time ever, there were no mail bomb incidents during the fiscal year.

A man who mailed two bombs in July 2001 was sentenced to 18 years in federal prison, three years' probation, and \$25,645 in restitution to his ex-wife. He mailed one bomb to his ex-wife at her place of employment and a second bomb to one of her co-workers. Fortunately, neither was seriously injured by the explosions that resulted when they opened the mail. Postal Inspectors located the man and obtained a signed confession from him within 24 hours of the detonations.



### Bomb Threats, Hoaxes, and Placed Devices

Less than 36 hours after receiving a report of a pipe bomb explosion on May 3, 2002, in a rural mailbox at Eldridge, Iowa, more than 150

Postal Inspectors joined forces with FBI agents and local law enforcement officers to investigate the crime. Six people, including four rural route carriers and two postal customers, were injured when six of 18 bombs placed in rural mailboxes across the Midwest exploded. Following an intense manhunt that relied on Inspection Service resources nationwide, John Lucas Helder, a 21-year-old engineering student enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, was identified as the alleged bomber.

Helder was arrested and taken into custody on May 7, 2002, by federal agents and members of the Nevada Highway Patrol after he was spotted in his 1992 Honda Civic approximately 20 miles east of Reno. He was armed with a rifle at the time of his arrest. Charges were filed against Helder in Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska for using an

The Inspector in Charge of the Midwest Division and the Kansas City Field Office Inspector in Charge held a press conference on May 7, 2002, after pipe bombing suspect Luke Helder was arrested and taken into custody 20 miles east of Reno. Charges were filed against Helder in Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska for using an explosive device to damage or destroy property involved in interstate commerce and resulting in personal injury, and for using a destructive device. Helder entered a plea of not guilty on June 7, 2002, but a trial date has not yet been set.

### Mail Bomb Incidents: Five-Year Trend

	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02
Incidents	7	6	7	3	0
Explosions	3	2	4	3	0
Injuries	3	0	2	2	0
Deaths	1	0	0	1	0



explosive device to damage or destroy property involved in interstate commerce and resulting in personal injury, and for using a destructive device. On June 5, a federal grand jury in the Northern District of Iowa indicted Helder on two criminal counts: using an explosive device to maliciously destroy property used in interstate commerce (a rural mailbox) and using a firearm (pipe bomb) to commit a crime of violence. The indictment was tied to injuries sustained by a woman and her husband when she reached into their rural mailbox on May 3 and discovered a pipe bomb, which exploded. Helder entered a plea of not guilty on June 7, 2002, but a trial date has not yet been set.

In another incident in May 2002, Postal Inspectors arrested a former postal employee for making a bomb threat to the Morgan Processing & Distribution Center in New York. Inspectors determined the man had previously worked as a mail handler at the Murray Hill Station, but was fired in 1997 for threatening to shoot fellow employees.

On January 13, 2002, a caller to the New York Police Department's "911" emergency hot line stated: "There is a bomb in the Morgan Post Office." Postal Inspectors initiated an investigation that led to an exhaustive review of cellular telephone records and to the identification of the suspect, who is being held in custody in lieu of bail pending psychiatric evaluation.

### Other Prohibited Mail

One strategy adopted by the Postal Inspection Service in response to the October 2001 anthrax mailings was the creation

of an interactive, Web-based application for tracking anthrax incidents across the country. The Anthrax Reporting Incident System (ARIS) was the product of a task force comprising Inspection Service representatives from the Corporate Information Management Division, Information Technology Division, Mail Theft and Violent Crimes Division, and various field divisions.

ARIS allows Inspectors to track and report anthrax incidents quickly and accurately, in a format easily disseminated to senior-level Postal Service officials. It also pro-

vides a formal declaration to alert postal managers when mail must be removed from the mailstream for an extended period of time.

Following the October 2001 anthrax mailings, Postal Inspectors responded to an unprecedented 17,735 hoax mailings. Perhaps the most notorious of these was the case

of Clayton Lee Waagner, arrested by Postal Inspectors on December 5, 2001, in Cincinnati, Ohio, on charges that he mailed hundreds of anthrax hoax letters to women's health clinics nationwide. During the investigation, Inspectors conducted surveillances of the suspect, monitored his telephone calls, and executed search warrants at his residence. Among other items found was a Postal Inspector's ID card bearing Waagner's photo. *America's*

*Most Wanted* aired a show about the fugitive in December 2001, and Inspectors from the Pittsburgh area staffed the call room for the show. Waagner was indicted on September 19, 2002, in Pennsylvania for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, threatening to use a weapon of mass destruction, extortion, mailing threatening communications, and mailing threatening interstate communications.

Other examples of prohibited mailings investigated by Postal Inspectors in FY 2002 follow.

■ An inmate at the State Correctional Institute in Albion, Pennsylvania, was sentenced in July 2002 to 40



**"Among many other duties, Postal Inspectors responded to more than 17,000 hoaxes and helped evacuate 600 post offices since October 2001."**

— *The Federal Times*,  
September 9, 2002





months in prison and three years' supervised release for mailing an anthrax hoax, consisting of powdered sugar and a threatening letter, to the Pennsylvania Probation and Parole Board in Harrisburg. Postal Inspectors determined the sender was already serving a 20-year sentence for previous violent crimes at the time of the mailing, which qualified him as a career offender and raised his sentencing guidelines. He was additionally ordered to pay \$4,191 in restitution for damages to the clothing of a mailroom employee and for costs related to a Hazardous Materials Team response.

■ A Lafayette, Louisiana, man was indicted in June 2002 on 78 counts, including transmitting threats through interstate commerce, mailing threatening communications, and threatening to use weapons of mass destruction. A joint investigation by Postal Inspectors and FBI agents determined he had mailed more than 200 hoax bomb and

anthrax letters in April 2002 and sent threatening e-mails in June 2002. Bail was denied due to the suspect's mental state and the danger he represented to himself and society.

■ A former mail handler at the Cicero, Illinois, Post Office was sentenced on May 16, 2002, to three years' probation and four months' home

confinement for mailing a threatening communication. He was indicted in November 2001 after Postal Inspectors reported that he wrote "Anthrax Enclosed" on a parcel that was received by a postal customer at the Cicero Branch of the Chicago Post Office in October 2001.



After *America's Most Wanted* aired a show on the anthrax hoax mailings, Postal Inspectors staffed the show's phone-in Tipline over a three-month period to respond to callers and follow up on leads.

Photo by Robert J. Campbell, Postal Inspection Service



Postal Inspectors followed biohazard procedures developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to enter the Trenton, New Jersey, Post Office, which was closed on October 18, 2001, due to anthrax contamination.

Postal Inspectors at the Bellmawr, New Jersey, Post Office, which was closed during the anthrax crisis.



Photo by Postal Inspector Allen L. McHenry

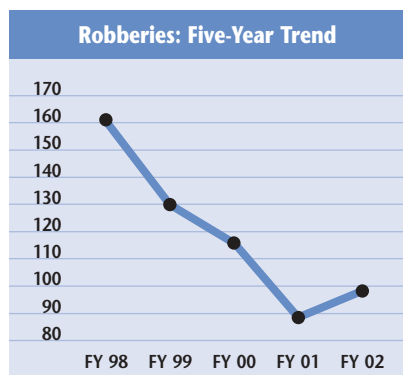
# Robberies and Burglaries

## Robberies

Robberies are a threat to postal employees, jeopardize the public's trust in the mail, and attack the financial integrity of the Postal Service. Postal Inspectors in all parts of the country receive expert training on how to safeguard both employees and facilities against criminals, but the U.S. Mail will likely always remain a compelling target for larceny.

Thieves who attack letter carriers seek mail containing valuables—such as jewelry, checks or financial information—or keys to mail receptacles that give them greater access to even more mail; those who target postal facilities are usually after cash and money orders. Postal Inspectors also investigate robberies of postal remittances and trucks (as well as “highway contract route” trucks) that transport valuable registered mail. This type of robbery often depends on the “inside” knowledge of a postal employee, who can provide important details to an accomplice on truck arrivals and departures.

Statistics for robberies that occurred in the past two fiscal years are shown in the chart at bottom, and five-year



robbery trends are depicted in the graph at left.

Following are examples of robberies investigated by Postal Inspectors in FY 2002.

■ Postal Inspectors arrested two suspects

for the July 1, 2002, robbery of the Fredericktown, Ohio, Post Office. The facility's Officer in Charge (OIC) was punched in the face and robbed of \$1,115 in postal funds. He was taken to the hospital by an emergency response squad, treated, and later released. Both suspects admitted their involvement in the robbery, and one of them admitted to striking the OIC. The investigation is continuing, and

federal prosecution is anticipated.

■ On June 20, 2002, an Alabama man was sentenced to 70 months in prison and three years of supervised release for the December 2001 robbery of a letter carrier from the Prichard Branch Post Office. The robber wore a bandana over his face, claimed he had a weapon, and demanded a parcel the carrier was in the process of delivering. The robber was on parole at the time of the incident after serving 10 years for armed robbery.

■ An Ohio man was sentenced in May 2002 to 96 months in prison, three years' supervised release, and restitution to the Postal Service of \$613. Postal Inspectors identified him as responsible for the May 2001 armed robbery of the Northridge Branch Post Office in Dayton.

■ A letter carrier on duty at the San Francisco P&DC was robbed and assaulted and his postal truck was hijacked in April 2002. Three suspects entered the postal truck, one assaulting the carrier and demanding money. Another suspect pushed the carrier out of the vehicle while the third hijacker jumped behind the wheel of the truck. The men drove off with the truck and its contents, including mail and postal keys; the carrier suffered minor physical injuries. Postal Inspectors and local authorities recovered the truck and located and arrested the three suspects. Two of the men pled guilty in July 2002 and are awaiting sentencing. The third suspect was sentenced in September 2002 to nine years in the custody of the California Youth Authority.

■ Postal Inspectors arrested a suspect on September 11, 2002, wanted in connection with the armed robbery of the Elizabethport Station Post Office in New Jersey. The robbery occurred on September 3, 2002, when two men, one brandishing a large knife, forced their way into the rear of the post office and demanded the station's funds. More than \$48,000 in cash and \$1,000 in checks were stolen, but there were no injuries. Two days later, a suspect connected with the case was remanded to the custody of U.S. Marshals pending a detention hearing, and a federal arrest warrant was issued for a second man. All efforts are being made to locate the second suspect at this time. Inspectors recovered more than \$9,000 in cash and watches from the robbery.

■ A man and a woman pleaded guilty to the August 2001 robbery of the Tigerville, South Carolina, Post Office. They were sentenced in April 2002 for robbing the post office and possessing property stolen during the robbery. The man was sentenced to 15 years and eight months in prison and five years of supervised release. His accomplice was sentenced

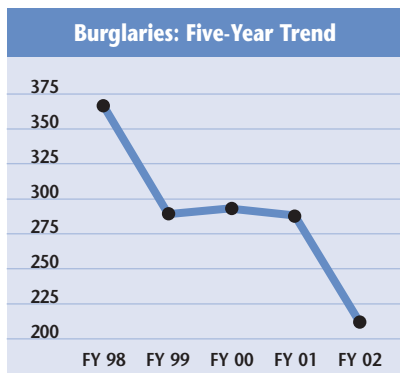
	Facility		Carrier		Other		TOTAL	
	FY 01	FY 02	FY 01	FY 02	FY 01	FY 02	FY 01	FY 02
<b>Robberies</b>								
with physical injury	3	3	5	3	1	0	9	6
without physical injury	41	41	20	22	19	30	80	93
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>99</b>

to five years of probation.

■ Postal Inspectors identified three suspects responsible for a series of armed robberies of letter carriers in Los Angeles between July and August 1997. The robbers are believed to be associated with the Centinela Park Family Blood street gang. At least six letter carrier robberies have been attributed to the gang. Inspectors arrested two gang members on December 20, 2002, who confessed to the robberies, and additional arrests are anticipated. The investigation is continuing.

### Burglaries

The Postal Inspection Service continues to see a significant decrease in the number of postal burglaries occurring over the past five years, although a few problems remain in rural areas of the country. About 81 percent of the burglaries in FY 2002 resulted in losses of less than \$1,000, or the theft of fewer than 100 postal money orders. The graph below depicts postal burglary trends over the past five years.



ed to a report that the Berry Creek Post Office had been burglarized and set afire. Mail and postal property were destroyed as a result of the vandalism. Damage to the facility was estimated at \$150,000. Arson investigators determined that piles of mail had been placed throughout the



Photo by Postal Inspector Allen L. McHenry

Following are examples of burglaries investigated by Postal Inspectors in FY 2002.

■ Postal Inspectors and members of the California Department of Forestry respond-

ed to a report that the Berry Creek Post Office had been burglarized and set afire. The fire was contained to the building's interior. Postal Inspectors and local authorities identified four men responsible for the crimes. State charges were filed in April 2002, and the investigation is continuing.

■ A man was sentenced to 92 months in prison, to be served concurrently with a 10-year sentence on unrelated charges, after pleading guilty to the April 27, 2001, burglary of the Alvordton, Ohio, Post Office. A second convicted burglar was sentenced in March 2002 to 10 years in prison for his part in the crime. Postal Inspectors determined the men were part of a ring responsible for at least seven burglaries in Ohio and Michigan.

■ A man was convicted on June 12, 2002, for the February 2000 burglary of a New Jersey Post Office. During a routine traffic stop, state police found rifled mail and other items stolen from the New Gretna Post Office, as well as drug paraphernalia, in the vehicle the man was driving. A records check revealed that Postal Inspectors had an outstanding warrant for the suspect, and he was taken into custody. The man is scheduled to be sentenced soon on charges related to his burglary conviction.